

No. 10

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AN
Gardiner Baker. April 11
ACCOUNT

OF THE
BELFAST REVIEW
AND
CELEBRATION
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.
IN A LETTER
TO A
FRIEND.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the following letter exhibits the courage which true liberty inspires, and the order which true dignity maintains; by setting before the reader, the manly and orderly manner in which the Volunteers of Belfast, &c. conducted themselves: It has been thought expedient to publish it here, to increase the sacred flame of liberty, which now manifests itself with considerable strength and brightness, among, almost, all ranks of men.

It is not to be expected that the ideas of all the friends of Reform should be exactly the same on that interesting subject, or that the resolutions of different Societies should all be expressed in the same manner; but these differences by a proper management, may serve very valuable purposes, in mutually supplying the defects, and correcting the excesses of each other. By a mutual and friendly correspondence, therefore, among all the friends of the people, the science of government may be so improved and perfected, as to have no jarring principles, which must ever disturb, if not destroy, the peace of society. But the peace of society will be preserved inviolate, when government embraces the interest of every individual; and this it will do, when that plan is followed, which is ordained by 'the Great Governor of the Universe, who alone knows to what degrees of earthly happiness mankind may attain, by perfecting the Arts of Government.' *Thus the Constituting Assembly of Pennsylvania expressed themselves, when framing one of the best Constitutions in America.*

That every pernicious and unprofitable branch of government be lopped off, that despotism may sink in oblivion, and that a government of Righteousness and Peace may reign through the whole world, is the sincere desire of

A FRIEND TO THE PEOPLE.

Edinburgh, 14th August, 1792.

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BELFAST REVIEW

AND

CELEBRATION OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT can hardly be expected, that in the limits of a letter, I can give a finished detail of the various and interesting spectacles of the day, but an endeavour to give the earliest and most extensive account, will in some measure plead excuse for any accidental or trivial omission, should any occur.

THIS day, which forms an illustrious æra in the history of man, and of nations, as having given birth to effects the most important to society, and to human nature the most beneficial: **TO WHICH A WORLD SHOULD PAY HOMAGE**, and to which a large majority of the inhabitants of every enlightened country in Europe have testified their approbation and respect; this day—the period of calculation for the emancipation of mankind, from the trammels of *superstition* and *corrupt power*; — this day—dear to every heart that has once felt the dignifying throb of **LIBERTY**, and pleasing to every mind that has been lifted above the debasement of *Tyranny* and *Despotism*, by a love of **JUSTICE** and **VIRTUE**:—this

In this manner the procession passed through the principal streets in the town, and proceeded to Linen Hall-street, where the whole fired three feu de joys, and then entered the White Linen Hall, where a chair was raised in the centre of the arca, round which the Volunteers and principal inhabitants assembled, to the amount of probably 5000, at least :

JOHN CRAWFORD, Esq; REVIEWING GENERAL ;
Having been called to preside—

Mr. Sinclair arose. He said he was deputed to propose two Addresses to the assembly for their consideration—one to the National Assembly of France, the other to the people of Ireland ; these addresses had been prepared by select Committees of the Volunteer Delegates of Belfast, and had afterwards received the assent of said Delegates—infamous calumnies he said, had gone abroad relative to them, which had been industriously circulated by interested men, but which he would not take up the time of the Assembly to refute ; the papers themselves, when read, would save him that trouble, and he would venture to say, there was not an individual present, who claimed the noble title of a FREEMAN, that would hesitate in giving his approbation. He then read the following Address to the National Assembly of France, which was unanimously agreed to.

TO THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE.

IT is not from vanity or ostentation, that we, the Citizens of Belfast, and Citizen Soldiers of that Town and Neighbourhood, take the liberty of addressing the Representative Majesty of the French People.—We address you, with the rational respect due to a title elevated far above all servile and idolatrous adulation, and with that affectionate fraternity of heart, which ought to unite man to man, in a mutual and inseparable union of interests, of duties and of rights ; which ought to unite Nation with Nation, into one great republic of the World.

On a day, sanctified as this has been, by a declaration of

human rights, the Germ of so much good to mankind, we meet with joy together, and wish well to France, to her National assembly, to her People, to her Armies, and to her King.

May you, LEGISLATORS, maintain, by the indefatigable spirit of liberty, that constitution which has been planned by the wisdom of your predecessors, and never may you weary in the work you have undertaken, until you can proclaim with triumphant security, *It is finished!* Manifest to an attentive and progressive world, that it is not the phrenzy of philosophy, nor the fever of wild and precarious liberty, which could produce such continued agitation, but that imperishable spirit of freedom alone, which always exists in the heart of man, which now animates the heart of Europe, and which in the event, will communicate its energy throughout the world, invincible and immortal!

We rejoice in the sincerity of our souls, that this creative spirit animates the whole mass of mind in France. We auspicate happiness and glory to the human race, from every great event which calls into activity the whole vigour of the whole community; amplifies so largely, the field of enterprize and improvement, and gives free scope to the universal soul of the Empire. We trust that you will never submit the liberties of France to any other guarantees than God, and the right hands of the People.

The Power that presumes to modify or to arbitrate with respect to a constitution adopted by the people, is an Usurper and a Despot, whether it be the meanest of the mob, or the Ruler of Empires, and if you condescend to negotiate the alteration of a single comma in your constitutional Code, France from that moment is a slave. Impudent Despots of Europe! Is it not enough to crush human nature beneath your feet at home, that you thus come abroad to disturb the domestic settlement of the nations around you, and put in motion your armies, those enormous masses of human machinery, to bear down every attempt that man makes for his own happiness? It is high time to turn these dreadful engines against their inventors, and,

organized as they have hitherto been, for the misery of mankind, to make them *now* the instruments of its glory and its renovation.

Success therefore, attend the ARMIES of France !

May your soldiers, with whom war is not a trade, but a duty, remember that they do not fight merely for themselves, but that they are the advance-guard of the world : nor let them imagine that the event of the war is uncertain. A single battle may be precarious, not so a few campaigns—There is an Omnipotence in a righteous cause, which masters the pretended mutability of human affairs, and fixes the supposed inconsistency of fortune. If you will be free, you *MUST* ; there is not a chance that one million of resolute men can be enslaved ; no Power on earth is able to do it ; and will the God of Justice and of Mercy ? Soldiers ! there is something that fights for you even in the hearts of your enemies. The native energies of humanity, rise up in voluntary array against tyrannical and preposterous prejudice, and all the little cabals of the heart, give way to the feelings of nature, of country and of kind.

Freedom and prosperity to the PEOPLE of FRANCE ! We think that such revolutions as they have accomplished, are so far from being out of the order of society, that they sprung *inevitably* from the nature of man and the progression of reason ; what is imperfect, he has the power to improve ; what he has created, he has a right to destroy. It is a rash opposition to the irresistible will of the public, that in some instances has maddened a disposition, otherwise mild and magnanimous, turned energy into ferocity, and the generous and gallant spirit of the French into fury and vengeance. We trust that every effort they now make, every hardship they undergo, every drop of blood they shed, will render their constitution more dear to them.

Long life and happiness to the KING of the FRENCH ! not the Lord of its soil and its servile appendages, but the King of Men, who can reserve their rights, while they intrust their Powers. In this crisis of his fate, may he

withstand every attempt to estrange him from the Nation; to make him an exile in the midst of France, and to prevent him from indentifying himself as a Magistrate with the Constitution, and as a Frenchman with the People.

We beseech you all as Men, as Legislators, as Citizens, and as Soldiers, in this your great conflict for liberty for France, and for the world, to despise all earthly danger, to look up to God, and to connect your Councils, your Arms, and your Empire to his Throne, with a chain of union, fortitude, perseverance, morality and religion.

We conclude, with this fervent prayer: That as the Almighty is dispersing the political clouds which have hitherto darkened our hemisphere, all Nations may use the light of Heaven: that, as in the latter age, the Creator is unfolding in his creatures, powers which had lain latent—they may exert them in the establishment of universal freedom, harmony and peace: may those who are free, never be slaves: may these who are slaves, be speedily free.

Mr. *Sinclair* next proposed the following Address
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

WE, the Volunteers and other Inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Belfast, assembled to commemorate this great day, embrace with earnestness the opportunity which it affords, at once to express our zeal and affection for the cause of liberty in France, and our undisguised opinions of subjects on the last importance to our native land.

Trained from our infancy in a love of Freedom, and an abhorrence of Tyranny, we congratulate our brethren of France and ourselves, that the infamous conspiracy of Slaves and Despots, against the happiness and glory of that admired and respected nation, and against the common rights of Man, has hitherto proved abortive.

Fixing our view steadily on the great principle of Gallic emancipation, we will not be diverted from that

magnificent object by the accidental tumults or momentary ebullitions of popular fury. We will not estimate the wisdom of her legislators by the transports of a mob; nor the spirit of her armies by the cowardice of a regiment; nor the patriotism of her people by the treachery of individuals; nor the justice of her cause by the numbers of her enemies. We judge with other views and on other principles.—We see with admiration, France extending the land-marks of human knowledge in the great art of government, and opening to the world new systems of policy and of justice. We see her renounce all wars on the principle of conquest. We see her propose an universal brotherhood and an eternal peace among the nations. We see her even now, when forced into arms and bloodshed by the unjust and unprincipled machinations of her enemies, separating, as far as possible, the innocent subjects from the guilty despot; respecting amidst the horrors of war, the property of individuals, and exempting from interruption the peaceful traffic of the merchant. It is from views like these, that we estimate that stupendous event, the Revolution which we this day commemorate; not from accidental irregularities, which, while we condemn them, we are compelled to pity, as feeling that they may spring not merely from any spirit of licentiousness, but from a sense of injury working on a sanguine people, still galled with the recollection of recent tyranny and oppression, and jealous of liberty, but just recovered, and scarcely yet secure.

Such are our sentiments on the subject of the French Revolution.—We come now to the state of our own country.

Impressed as we are with a deep sense of the excellence of our Constitution, as it exists in theory, we rejoice that we are not, like our brethren in France, reduced to the hard necessity of tearing up inveterate abuse by the roots, even where utility was so intermixed as not to admit of separation. Ours is an easier, and a less unpleasant task; to remove with a steady and a temperate resolution, the abuses which the lapse of many years inatten-

tion and supineness in the great body of the people, and unremitting vigilance in their rulers to invade and plunder them of their rights, have suffered to overgrow and to deform that beautiful system of government, so admirably suited to our situation, our habits and our wishes. We have not to innovate, but to restore. The just prerogative of our Monarch we will respect, and will maintain. The constitutional power of the Peers of the realm we wish not to invade. We know that in the exercise of both, abuses have grown up; but we also know that these abuses will be at once corrected, so as never again to recur, by restoring to us the people, what we, for ourselves, *demand as our right*, our due weight and influence in that estate, *which is our property*, the Representation of the people in Parliament.

Thoroughly impressed with the unjust and ruinous inequality of that representation, with the consequent corruption, which pervades all ranks in the state; with the destruction of the morals, the sacrifice of the commerce, and the hourly and imminent danger to the liberty of our country, we will inflexibly persevere in the pursuit of that great remedy for all our political evils, a Parliamentary Reform: a reform temperate, equal and just, which shall restore lustre to the Crown, dignity to the peerage, and their due weight and influence to the people of Ireland.

But while we thus state our sentiments on the subject of reform, we feel it incumbent upon us to declare, as we now do, that no reform, were even such attainable, would answer our ideas of utility and justice, which should not equally include all sets and denominations of Irishmen. We reprobate and abhor the idea, that political inequality should result from religious opinions; and we should be ashamed, at the moment when we are seeking for liberty ourselves, to acquiesce in any system founded on the slavery of others.

We have now declared our sentiments to the world. In declaring them we spurn, with equal disdain, restraint, whether proceeding from a mob or a monarch, from a riot or a proclamation. We look with a mixture of abomination and

contempt on the transactions, which, on the last anniversary of the French Revolution, degraded the national character of England; when neither the learning, the piety, the public spirit, nor the private virtue of a Priestly could protect him from the savage fury of the vilest of an ignorant and a bigotted rable, by whom the religion of the country has been dishonoured, the name of the sovereign insulted, and all law and order levelled in the dust, to the disgrace, not less of the integrity of the magistrates who were the fomenters, than of the spirit of the people, who were timid witnesses of the ravage and destruction. As little should we respect any attempt, under colour of authority, to fetter down our minds, or prevent the publication of our grievances, and our determination to seek redress. In the pursuit of reform, that great measure indispensable to the freedom, the happiness, and the glory of the Country, we will inflexibly persevere, and for its attainment, we will rely with confidence on the steadiness, the public spirit and the zealous co operation of our countrymen.

Mr. Joy said, there was one clause in it which could not receive his approbation: the clause he alluded to, was that which expresses the propriety of including Irishmen of every religious persuasion in reform; this, he said, embraced the Catholic question, and tended to the immediate emancipation of that body; an emancipation, for which, he said, they were not yet prepared. He thought the members of that community, were by no means capable of liberty, and therefore thought it rash and dangerous to emancipate them at present, though he hoped to see the day when it could be done with safety.—He moved an amendment, the spirit of which was, to introduce the word *gradual* into the paragraph.

Captain Cunningham seconded the motion.

A debate of a considerable length took place, in which the address as it stood originally, was warmly supported by the Revd. S. Kelburn, the Revd. T. Birch, the Revd. Doctor Dickson, Mr. Robt. Thomson, Mr. Robt. Getty, Mr. John Hallett, Mr. S. Neilson, Mr.

Samson, and Doctor Callwell of Magherafelt. The amendment was supported by Counsellor Stewart and Mr. Joy.

On the question being put, the amendment was negatived by a very great majority, and then the question was put upon the original Address, as proposed by Mr. Sinclair, and agreed to unanimously.

It was then moved by Mr. Thomson, and seconded by Mr. White, that the Address to the National Assembly should be transmitted by the President of the Meeting to the President of the Assembly. Agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Sinclair moved, that the proceedings of the day should be published, this was seconded by Mr. Getty, and agreed to unanimously.

The President having left the chair, and Mr. Sinclair being called to it; it was unanimously

Resolved, that the warmest thanks of the Meeting are due to the President, for his very great propriety and conduct in the Chair, and for his ready and obliging compliance with the request of the Volunteers, to review them, and to preside on the occasion.

CELEBRATION BANQUET.

When the business at the Hall was finished, the company retired to dinner at the Donegall-Arms, where an elegant Entertainment was provided. The general did the honours of the table, with that ease and grace which distinguishes the man of sense and the polite gentleman. The greatest harmony and good humour prevailed throughout the whole company. The following toasts, several of which were illustrated in a very perspicuous manner by the Chairman, were given.

THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY, 1789.

The King of Ireland. — The Constitution of France, may it be permanent. — The Constituting Assembly of France, — may wisdom, spirit, and decision direct its councils. — The French Army; may an ardent love of their country be held paramount to every other duty in the Character of a Soldier. — May the glorious Revolution of

France teach the Governments of the Earth wisdom.—— May the example of one Revolution prevent the necessity of others.—— Lasting freedom and property to the united states of America.—— The people of Poland, and success to their Arms.—— The Rights of Man, may all nations have wisdom to understand, and spirit to assert them.—— May all Governments be those of the laws, and all laws those of the people.—— May the free nations of the world vie with each other in promoting Liberty, Peace, Virtue, and Happiness among men.—— The increased, increasing and sacred flame of Liberty.—— Ireland.—— The union of Irishmen.—— The Sovereignty of the people, acting by a just and equal representation.—— The Liberty of the Press.—— The Volunteers of Ireland, and their revered General, Earl of Charlemont,—— The Constitutional Societies of Great Britain and Ireland.—— The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.—— President Washington.—— Stanislaus Augustus, may his example be imitated.—— Mr. Paine, may perverted eloquence, ever find so able an opposer.—— Mr. Fox and the rights of Juries, in substance as well as form.—— Mr. Grattan and the minority of the Irish House of Commons.—— The Literary Characters, who have vindicated the Rights of Man, and may genius ever be employed in the cause of freedom.—— The memory of John Locke.—— The memory of William Molyneux.—— The memory of Dr. Franklin.—— The memory of Mirabeau.—— The memory of Dr. Price.

The following toasts received the most marked approbation.

Confusion to the enemies of French Liberty, (with three times three)—— May the glorious Revolution of France teach the Governments of the Earth wisdom, (three and six)—— Unanimity to Irishmen, *without which we can never be free*, added by the President, (three and nine, with hands grasped)—— President Washington, (three and nine).—— Stanislaus Augustus, (three and nine).—— Mr. Fox and the rights of Juries, (three and nine).—— The General, (after he left the room) three

times three.—Colonel Sharman, a speedy re-establishment to his health, (three times three).—Colonel M'Manus, long life to him, (three times three.)

SONG

IN COMMEMORATION

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

GALLIA burst her vile shackles on this glorious day,

And we dare to applaud the great deed ;

We dare to exult in a Tyrant's lost sway,

And rejoice that a Nation is freed :

For this we assemble, regardless, of those

Who wish to enslave the free Mind :

Our foes, we are conscious, are Liberty's foes,

And our friends, are the friends of Mankind.

If Angels e'er lean from the mansions above,

The affairs of our Planet to scan,

They could not this wondrous event but approve

As the noblest exertion of Man,

An exertion which bids servile Nations arise,

And enjoy what the Deity gave.

To be free is a duty man owes the All wise,

And he sins, who is tamely a slave.

Oppression's dark vapours had shrouded the land,

And the Image of God was defac'd ;

Man trembled and crouch'd at his Lordling's command,

And the foot which had spurn'd him embrac'd ;

But at length the horizon, by Learning's bright rays,
 And Columbia's strong tempest was clear'd,
 Light pour'd o'er the Nation in one brilliant blaze,
 Man saw—and his chains disappear'd.

Where millions of bayonets shield her from harm
 'Mong our Neighbours, now Liberty dwells :
 She smiles unappall'd, at each foreign alarm,
 And her smile. all that's gloomy dispels.
 On the rock of Man's right, she a fortress has plann'd,
 Which through many a bright age shall endure,
 Like a Crag 'midst the waves undisturb'd shall it stand,
 And preserve Heaven's blessing secure.

With electrical force, thro' the nations around,
 Her fire may dear liberty dart ;
 'Mong the Sons of the North may its glow soon be found,
 May it warm each Iberian heart ;
 'Cross the huge snowy Alps, to a region once dear,
 May the soul-lifting influence be hurl'd ;
 May its radiance the whole Human family cheer——
 And may Tyrants be banish'd the World.

BELFAST, JULY 14th, 1792.

F I N I S.